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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

APPROACH OF WAR,

AND THE

CONDUCT

OF

HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS.

*Not in*

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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

APPROACH OF WAR.

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**T**HE debates in Parliament on the subject of Mr. Pitt's intended war with Russia and her allies, contain a body of information which, for its urgent importance, ought to be made, in some shape or other, to reach the sense and feelings of every Englishman. But there is so much more

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of it, ~~that~~ the common mass of our fellow citizens can comprehend and combine at once, (and it is the common mass who pay the expence of war with their daily bread,) that a selection of the principal matters, stated in plain words, and those words as few as possible, appears more likely to answer that purpose than any circumstantial detail of the arguments of either side.

Let me previously disclaim, however, in the name of every one who has heard of this disastrous measure, (except perhaps the Minister's immediate dependents) all approbation, support, or participation of what kind soever in its origin. Be it known to those whom the mere, general rumour of its approach has but just reached,



reached, that we, in this metropolis, most decidedly reprobate the counsels to which it is owing, detest the principles on which it is maintained, and distrust the capacity of those who are to conduct it : that Parliament itself hesitates ; while indignation and alarm fill every breast, without regard to connections, or parties, or any other personal motive. Taxed to the uttermost farthing, we find a rash, inexperienced Minister about to plunge us into a war with a Power, long the friend of this country, who has made no attack upon our territories or commerce, offered no insult to our honour, nor shewn the slightest disposition to such conduct ; who has done, moreover, nothing that can be construed into an injury or offence to any one

of our allies, in any shape, form, mode, or under any construction, or the perversion of any whatsoever.

As to the *cause* of this war, (*reason* there is none) Ministers seem determined to involve it in profound darkness, and all the low mystery of state intrigues. Led like beasts to the slaughter, the people are insolently told, WAR OR PEACE IS THE KING'S PREROGATIVE. This is plain language; and we to whom it is addressed, are not likely to envelope ours in much circumlocution. Force us, by dint of oppression and distress, to inquire into the source of that prerogative, and we may be tempted to resume it. But what does that Minister deserve whose abuse of his power is such, as to make us  
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entertain a doubt of the excellence of our Constitution ? A life and reputation such as his will poorly atone for the mischief.

Except on this ABSOLUTE WILL of the Minister, we know not where to fix. It is an acknowledged fact, that there exists, no Treaty between Great Britain and other Powers by which the public faith is pledged to our interference in the war between Russia and the Porte. Had the defensive Treaties with Prussia and Holland borne such a construction, we should have kept our faith by furnishing our contingent. Even this were to be lamented ; but to this there is some end. Great Britain would, in that case, openly have appeared as auxiliary. The projected war, however, has no claim to that character.

rafter. In fact, it has no character at all but that of being a war of vanity. A peace of vanity has once been heard of; the mistress of Lewis XV. anxious for the renewal of that monarch's attentions, gave peace to Europe at Aix-la-Chapelle. But the modern French dislike the system on which these things were done; justly imagining that the vanity which gave peace one day might involve them in hostilities the next. They have sent it, therefore, to England for the use of a Heaven-born minister, whose first trial of its principle is by a war, more wanton and more wicked than the page of history records since the civilization of mankind, and the connection of states with each other.

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He tells us as much himself. A singular distinction between his *treaties*, and his *system*, unravels the whole mystery.

His treaties, under this distinction, are supposed to contain a set of stipulations to be interpreted, not by the plain, obvious import of the terms in which they are drawn, but by a reserved, secret, unexplained system concealed within the breasts of two or three ambitious projectors, whose arbitrary discretion is the only rule of their conduct.

We are too deeply interested in this question to pass it by without a few observations.

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It is the right of Parliament to call for all treaties. The King's Minister, advising his Majesty to such and such alliances, when he lays them before Parliament and asks its approbation, obviates the exercise of that right by meeting its wishes. So acted Mr. Pitt in the case before us. The Dutch treaty, the Prussian treaty, the subsidiary treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse, were all produced to Parliament; and the motives for entering into them explained to be the establishment of a *pacific, defensive system*. They were said to be equal to that object; and confidence, largely called for, was as largely given.

What did Mr. Pitt by this, but pledge his character and responsibility, that un-



der this pacific, defensive system, established not upon one treaty merely, but resulting from an aggregate of treaties, the country was safe, and might repose in peace? If, therefore, while he held forth these prospects in his declarations to Parliament explanatory of the nature of his three treaties, he was secretly carrying on a series of intrigues, remonstrances and representations at foreign courts, totally opposite to the nature of those treaties, and wholly incompatible with them, and which he now calls a *system of peace* in contradistinction to the *pacific system* he laid before Parliament—I ask whether such conduct be fairly described by the terms mockery, delusion, or insult; or whether it be any thing less than a direct fraud upon the King, upon Parliament, and upon the people?

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Such

Such, however, is the naked fact. He tells us, that to preserve his *pacific system* we must go to war with Russia and her Allies, although no article in the treaties forming that system has received the least contravention by those powers. When he comes to justify the war, the first thing he does is to renounce and completely abandon the whole of his *pacific system*; while he brings forward, for the first time, and dictatorially demands that Parliament shall transfer its confidence to it—another system, dark, secret, and unavowed; confused in its object, fraudulent in its creation, unknown and inexplicable to any being upon earth but himself and his Prussian confederate. As to the Dutch one, he has been wholly kept out of the secret from the beginning.

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Now however, that we are advanced thus far in the discovery, let us see to what this system leads.

A war with Russia, says the Minister, is necessary for the preservation of the balance of power in Europe.

The period at which this phrase of *balance of power* possessed any determinate meaning, was when the mighty monarch of France, concentrated in her strength, and insolent in her prosperity, menaced not the liberties of Europe only, but the constitution established in this island at the Revolution, and the settlement of the crown in his Majesty's illustrious family. It was then that King William began, and his successors com-

pleted a system of defensive alliances, by which the confederating powers guaranteed mutually to each other the integrity of their respective dominions. These objects were clear, intelligible, and grounded upon the most imminent necessity.

While France continued formidable, (and never was she more so than at the close of the American war) it was not wise to abandon this system. Change of circumstances might demand a change of the members composing such a confederacy, but never could justify its abandonment. It is notorious to Europe, however, that Mr. Pitt did wholly neglect, and that his companions were suffered to ridicule, "the romantic system," as they

they called it, in declamatory speeches:\* and that he never bestowed a thought upon the balance of power, until France, the object of it, by deserting her friends in Holland, and by the operation of her internal distractions, avowed her total incapacity to disturb the peace of mankind any longer. Our profound Minister then began seriously to think of a balance of power; and plunged himself over head and ears in all the trash and rubbish of German politics.

As yet, however, this *balance of power* did not seem to have any distinct object in the minds either of Mr. Pitt or his confederates. It proceeded at first upon a

\* Mr. Wilberforce,

general

general and complex plan of fomenting quarrels between all sorts of nations, of keeping alive animosities, and stirring up rebellions to the legitimate sovereignty of every state that came within the compass of their influence. These they put in motion, by a set of meddling, mischief-making intrigues, hatched, as it should rather seem, in the office of some plodding instrument of "village vexation," than digested by wise Statesmen in the cabinets of great Kings. Unlike, indeed, to that bold Congress of Princes who planned under the auspices of our immortal Deliverer at the Hague, the system and the military measures that baffled the victorious arms of Louis, and secured the liberty of nations !

But



But an object could not long be wanting where the source of litigation was so little likely to fail. His Prussian Majesty wanting a few towns in Poland, (which it seems his predecessor was either ashamed to ask, or had forgot to take) found himself opposed, as well he might be, by the influence of the Court of Petersburg. The Confederates agreed, therefore, to *humble the Russian power.*

In pursuance of this plan, they began by exciting the Ottoman Porte to a direct breach of the Peace of Kainardgi; a peace, to the establishment of which, on honourable and advantageous terms to Russia, Great Britain had principally contributed. I state not this fact upon vague rumour; it was put very strongly by Mr. Fox to  
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the Minister, who did not deny it, in the debate on the King's Message. It is loudly proclaimed in every European Court ; with the addition, that Great Britain was the chief agent in this project of aggression. The next step was to engage Sweden in the contest. Three years of continued ill fortune to the Turkish arms distinguish this war, during which the British Minister, who now talks to us so emphatically of the danger to the Balance of Europe, never once interfered to assist either of those whom he had stimulated to begin it, in hopes, no doubt, that all three of them, Sweden, Turkey, as well as Russia, would, in their turns, be so completely beaten, as to leave them at last entirely at the mercy of the Confederates. I blush at the disingenuous part Britain is  
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compelled to act under this hateful system, instead of recurring to that open, manly style of remonstrance in which she has been used to state her grievances, and to enforce the redress of them.

The meaning of a Balance of Power, however, now appears to resolve itself into this single point, viz. That RUSSIA SHALL NOT KEEP POSSESSION OF OCZAKOW AND ITS DISTRICT. For after all their parade, the fact is, that *Russia has long ago consented to the surrender of all she has taken from the Turks, except the fortress of Oczakow.* A plain, uninformed man would naturally ask, What are the revenues, what the commerce, what the strength, population, or extent of the dependencies of this Oczakow? Whether

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it were equal to Silesia, before the House of Brandenburg, anxious to preserve the Balance of Power, usurped it? Or whether, like the British Gibraltar, some point of honour annexed a value to its barren rock? Nothing of all this would he find to be true, or that Oczakow was any thing but a pile of ruins, useless to Russia but for the protection of her commerce on the Nieper, useless to the Porte except for the purpose of molesting that commerce,

But if the Balance be destroyed by Russia's *retaining* Oczakow, what became of it when Oczakow was *taken*? This great, imperious necessity, to which all justice must submit, was then as pressing at least, as at the present hour. Instead  
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of suggesting to us, however, the remotest apprehension of our being likely, at any time, to engage in war, no less than five speeches from the Throne have been produced since the capture of this fortress,\* in not one of which is there the least mention of the probability of such an event. Very humane regret is expressed by his Majesty that the war should continue between Russia and the Porte, but so far from any terror of its ultimately reaching this happy island, not a little credit is taken for keeping us out of it.

Of the contrary persuasion, in the minds of the King's Ministers, we have some memorable evidence. On the 19th of

\* Oczakow was taken in December 1788.

April, 1790, Mr. Pitt opened a budget, in which he argued much upon the flourishing state of the revenue, much upon the new sources of commerce and wealth which had been discovered, much upon *the continuance of Peace which he saw nothing in the aspect of politics that could disturb.* Long previous to this, so far back, I believe, as the 10th of February, he knew that a gross and outrageous insult had been offered to the British flag by a Spanish officer at Nootka Sound. Accused of duplicity in having held out so decisively the prospect of Peace when he had known this fact so long, what was his defence? That *the complaint* had been communicated to him at that time, but *not the particulars of aggravation*:—adding a convenient “If” to qualify the  
 affu-



assurances of his speech. Parliament received the excuse ; for it was the age of confidence, a plant of rapid growth in sanguine bosoms ! But *now* what becomes of it ? At this very time Oczakow was in the possession of Russia ; and the great Laudohn, at the head of the Imperial armies, had restored the fortune of Austria on the Danube, and was concerting his operations with the Russian General. If ever the Balance of Power could be affected by the successes of the Russian arms, and the hostile interference of this country be justified, that surely was the moment. Mr. Pitt thought not so, nor had one idea upon the subject entered his mind : unless the miraculous *if*, preserving its virtue to the last, shall be pressed  
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into the service here to save the wretched remnant of his consistency.

But this, says Mr. Pitt, is not the question, " My having been wrong then is no argument against my being right now. The balance *is* in danger, and Great Britain must go to war to preserve its equilibrium."

The system breaks upon us now in its full deformity. Here it is revealed that we are bound by the balance of power to AN IMPLIED GUARANTY of the whole Turkish Empire, which it becomes our duty to watch over and preserve in its unity, undivided and indivisible. It follows by analogy to the limits of other States,  
that

that every change in this unsteady balance, varying often according to natural causes, will demand a war to settle it. Hence it will appear, (and I am sure with more reason) that if the present troubles in France should end in re-uniting Alsace to the Austrian possessions, Prussia must receive a proportionate augmentation of territory in order to compensate for the addition of that rich province to the dominions of his *natural enemy*, and that England must risk a war to obtain it for him.

If such be the principle avowed, instead of *confidence* the time is come for a general union among mankind, to extirpate this atrocious system of carnage and devastation, and make a lasting example

ample of its authors : for it goes to the extent not only of a reciprocal guaranty among the contracting parties of the integrity of their respective possessions, but forcibly to keep those of every individual state *exactly in their present condition*, without regard to the benefit of those who live in them. A more monstrous principle was never heard of. It goes, in the case before us, to stop the progress of all civilization and improvement, to continue some of the finest countries in the world under the barbarous dominion of ignorance, superstition, and that worst of all tyrannies, the systematic servitude of the mind as well as the body to the influence of fanaticism. Such, however, are the principles in defence of which Englishmen are to leave their homes and risk the last of their

their resources in a war with a nation that never injured them ! Who, after this, shall answer for the duration of peace a month together ? The limits of mighty Empires must vary in the necessity of things. Their strength, too, increases in other ways besides the extension of those limits. The aspiring, energetic principle of commerce acknowledges no balance of power, no theories of ambitious monarchs, who, to secure their own petty interests, would keep whole countries depopulate, and check the fertility of indulgent nature herself. Where is the presumptuous arrogance that shall bind Providence to its systems, and forbid the soil to share its riches with industrious man ? As well might we stipulate that Siberia shall not rise from her deserts, or settle the popu-

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lation of Tartary at the Congress of Czistowa.

These are the objects of Mr. Pitt's *system of peace*, and the means he takes to accomplish them. But there must be a pretence for all things. Violence and injustice never yet were bold enough to call themselves by their own names. MEDIATION is the word. The allied powers offer their mediation to restore peace.

The polish of diplomatique language is truly curious; but he that seeks to understand it without much previous experience of what Kings at the head of armies are capable of proposing, he that annexes the ideas received in common life to the same terms when used in the  
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intercourse of cabinets, will find that he has much and woefully mistaken their meaning. Who, for instance, would not think that one independent sovereign by offering his *mediation* to another, meant his *good offices* to prevent the further effusion of human blood? No such extravagance!—To mediate, according to the new system, means to say, “ I have urged  
 “ your old enemy to attack you. Him  
 “ you have beaten, and conquered many  
 “ of his provinces. The war must have  
 “ cost you immense sums, and there is no  
 “ denying that by the laws of war you  
 “ have a right to indemnify yourselves at  
 “ the expence of the aggressor. But *it is*  
 “ *my fancy* that you should not keep one  
 “ foot of those conquests, and that you  
 “ should, forthwith, restore every pro-

“ vince, town, or fortrefs you have taken  
“ fince the beginning of the war. THIS  
“ IS MY WILL, and if you don’t make  
“ peace on thefe conditions, out of my  
“ regard and friendship, I mean to force  
“ you to it.”

We have here the true ftyle of modern  
*mediation*! A ftyle to which I refer all  
thofe who have hitherto imagined that  
there was fome infolence in the manifeftos  
of Lewis the Fourteenth. But the ri-  
dicule—if aught in this abominable im-  
pofition on mankind can juftify the con-  
fidering it in the light of ridicule, is ftill  
ftronger, when applied to our allies the  
Turks. They, it is well known, were  
earnestly difpofed to conclude a peace  
upon the terms offered by Ruffia. The  
obliging

obliging mediators, however, told them  
 “ No :—we love you so much, that we  
 “ had rather you were all cut to pieces  
 “ than consent to it.” “ *I had rather see*  
 “ *you hanged,*” says Mr. Pitt, “ *than mar-*  
 “ *ried to another.*”

All this, notwithstanding, Mr. Pitt  
 tells us, is *necessary to his system of peace*.  
 There can be neither sense, nor jus-  
 tice, in a system involving such ne-  
 cessities ! Say that the renovation of our  
 treaties with Holland was a wise and ne-  
 cessary measure. I admit it. Every sub-  
 sequent necessity, however, becomes more  
 and more obscure, and every other grada-  
 tion more and more doubtful ; but when  
 by little and little we find ourselves en-  
 compassed

compassed in a scene of troubles, and frauds, and violences, like those I have been forced to state, depend upon it we have lost our way, and are got into a path that leads to ruin, disgrace, and every species of national calamity.

On the treaty with Holland, Mr. Pitt engrafts a Prussian treaty to preserve the first, and a Hessian treaty to complete the objects of both. Next, according to his doctrine of the balance of power, succeeds the necessity of a private, bye system, under which the avowed objects of these treaties might be explained, amended, modified, or entirely revoked, if it should so please him. Then comes the necessity of stirring up the Turks against the Russians

fians in the south, of setting Sweden to attack her in the north, and of fomenting the troubles in the Netherlands to divert the attention of her allies ; and as the last link in this chain of necessities, there follows, that we should desert, betray, and “ wash our hands ” of them all, except as far as we may still prevent the unhappy, duped Ottomans, from saving themselves by peace, by promising to lavish the last treasures, and spill the best blood of our countrymen to support the war.

These are some of the leading features in this disastrous business. But however justice may be blind, injustice is not always quick-sighted. The capacity of ministers appears upon a level with their principles.

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They begin by exciting the Turks to commence hostilities in 1788. A Manifesto from the Court of Vienna announces the alliance of Joseph II. with the Czarina. He advances to the attack on the side of Bulgaria, but meets with a reception that soon reduces him to great distress. In the mean time, a dangerous insurrection in Brabant threatens him with a total loss of those Provinces ; and a lingering disease of mind as well as body, bends him to the grave. To detach his successor from the Russian alliance, a Prussian army advances towards Bohemia ; while another assembled in the neighbourhood of the Netherlands, threatens their separation from the Austrian government for ever. The British Minister follows every



every where, and is the life and soul of all the negociations.

With so valuable a pledge in their hands, would any one think of seeing it restored to Leopold before he had entered into a positive renunciation of his engagements with Russia ?

That pledge, however, was given up to him ; and under the Convention of Reichenbach he has been allowed quietly to resume the possession of his revolted Provinces, and to secure and fortify himself against any attack ; preserving no less his engagements with Russia, whom he is ready to join with a full treasury, and one of the finest armies in the world.

Next comes the King of Sweden : the power of most consequence to us if we meditated an attack upon Russia in the North. Him we urged to this "work of murder," by promising to co-operate with him in case of necessity. In particular, the British Court had engaged to send a fleet to the Baltic, last summer, without which assistance, indeed, his inferiority was too decided to permit his effecting any object of the allied Courts. That Monarch tells us so himself, in his Memorial presented to the Divan in September last by his Envoy, Monf. de Hadenstein : a document in which he states expressly, that "*his Allies had made him many promises, but performed none;*" and in which he warns the Porte "*not to place too much confidence in them*"

*“ them, who in their present circumstances  
 “ seek rather their own interest than those of  
 “ the Porte.”* The hour of trial arrives. His desperate courage, his still more desperate reliance on the British Minister’s veracity, brings him into extreme danger. In vain he looks for the promised succours! his affairs grow desperate—he concludes a Peace first, and afterwards an alliance with this very power against whom we had taken so much pains to irritate him, and in whose cause he is now actually arming his whole force.

The dispute with Spain occasioned us to arm in a manner so formidable, that Mr. Dundas, a man of no delicate nerves, declared that it was enough to frighten Europe for years to come, and give us

the ascendancy in all political disputes. Whether the temptation of trying its effect upon Russia induced Mr. Pitt to risk this war, I cannot say ; but certainly her Imperial Majesty appears as if she would yield to no ordinary terrors. Of this mighty force, which cost the nation nearly four millions, the chief part was suffered to return to the mass from whence it sprung, without our having ventured upon one representation to the Court of Petersburg about the mischief she was doing to the Balance of Europe.

After all these instances of folly, madness, and incapacity in the British Minister, what answer shall we give him when he comes to ask us for MONEY and CONFIDENCE ?

FIDENCE ?—I will briefly recapitulate his pretensions.—These are,

That he negotiates treaties for the avowed purpose of preserving peace, and provokes a war before any of these treaties are contravened.

That he binds himself to a *system*, which, under the loose phrase of preserving the Balance of Power, involves his country in all the broils and quarrels of the Continent.

That he deceives Parliament by concealing the existence of this system, and shewing them only the treaties.

That he stimulates the Porte to commence hostilities against Russia, and now  
that

that she is nearly ruined, will not let her make peace.

That he urges the King of Sweden to the same conduct, and deserts him in the day of danger.

That he risks the plunging his country into a war, in the year 1791, under a pretence that the Balance of Europe is overthrown by the capture of a Turkish fortress in the year 1788.

That within this period he suffered many opportunities of effecting his purpose, and of thereby saving his country from the impending mischief, to escape him.

That



That he advised his Majesty to declare from the throne, the little probability of its involving his kingdoms.

Finally, That he selects, for the object of his attack, a power whom it has hitherto been the system of his country to cultivate and cherish; whose growth, whether commercial or political, can be of no detriment to us; and whose aggrandizement in the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean, can only encroach upon the House of Bourbon, Great Britain having no trade or colonies in that quarter of the world.

The plain, direct answer of every Englishman who values his country, his laws, his property, his children; or whose  
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mind is enabled by education to expand itself into an honest wish for the general cause of humanity—*must* be, and if not this day, it *will* be soon—

**YOU SHALL HAVE NEITHER MONEY  
FOR WARS, NOR CONFIDENCE FOR COR-  
RUPT JOBS!**



THE END.

